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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) Dual earner couples (136) and housewives couples (103) were studied. The focus was on the relationship between marital satisfaction and satisfaction with housework and child-care arrangements, doing own share of housework and childcare and perceiving spouse as doing his/her share of housework and childcare. Analysis was done at both individual and couple levels. At both levels of analysis, satisfaction with housework and child care arrangements and perceiving spouse as doing his/her share of housework and childcare					
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# The Impact of Family Structure on the Structure of Work

## A Final Report

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# The Impact of Family Structure on the Structure of Work

## A Final Report

The movement of large numbers of middle class women into the work force has had a major impact on family life. The focus of this research was to begin to investigate whether this movement of women into the work force, also is causing a change in the structure of work.

Despite repeated calls to researchers to acknowledge that the individual functions as a totality and that people are simultaneously members of two institutions, of two overlapping role systems - work and family (Kanter, 1977), most studies examine a person's role in only one area of life. Much of the research with the potential to study the work family interfaces has been segregated, focusing on one sphere at a time. Furthermore, except for the very small literature on absorption (Papanek, 1972), there was essentially no research that looked at the crossover relationships between both members of a dual-earner couples' work and family life when we wrote our proposal.

The research supported by this contract investigated the interfaces between dual-earner couples' work and family behaviors by looking simultaneously at intra-spouse relations (same person work and family issues) and cross-spouse issues (his work and her family issues, for example). Dual-earner couples were treated as a system with inputs from and outputs to both work and family environments. Particular attention was paid to the question of whether dual earner couples with children were restructuring their work behaviors in order to accommodate family matters.

The objectives of the research were:

1. The identification of work role behaviors and family role behaviors that conflict.
2. The identification of occupations in which work role behaviors are traditional, but in which there is some evidence that alternative work role behaviors are being exhibited.
3. The identification of family types characterized by family developmental stages and by each spouse's marital/family satisfaction and family involvement.
4. The identification of conditions of job involvement, organizational culture, labor economics and career stage that facilitate work role restructuring.
5. The development of a technique to measure the degree of work role restructuring.
6. The test of a model of relationships between work and family factors and work role restructuring.

The research included two different questionnaire surveys of couples and an interview study in six different firms. A list of technical reports and publications is in an appendix to this report.

#### The Studies

"Patterns of Work and Family Involvement"

"Perceptions of the Division of Housework and Child Care and Marital Satisfaction"

"Professional Couples and Money"

"Restructuring Work for Family: How Dual-Earner Couples with Children Manage"

In "Patterns of Work and Family Involvement" we characterized couples in terms of each spouses' work and family involvement and found that different types of couples had significantly different attitudes toward and behaved differently in work and family roles. This study established that there are significant cross-spouse patterns among dual-earner couples but not among single-earner couples. The results indicated that the pressure of a wife's working may be such that both husband and wife are forced to participate in managing the demands of work that affect family and vice versa. Over time, they develop a coordinated pattern of routines and responsibilities. Their involvement in work and family roles reflects that pattern.

In "Perceptions of the Division of Housework and Child Care and Marital Satisfaction" we found that one spouse's housework and child care behavior influenced the other's marital satisfaction and that the patterns of these relationships varied depending on whether one or both spouses were working. For dual-earner husbands and single-earner wives, marital satisfaction was correlated with perceiving the spouse as doing more than his/her share of family work and perceiving self as doing less than own share. For dual-earner wives and single-earner husbands, marital satisfaction was correlated with perceiving that both self and the spouse were doing a fair share of family work. These results established that there was a mutual influence relationship between spouses' family role behavior. The results were discussed in terms of traditional sex-role stereotypes and contemporary role expectations.

In "Professional Couples and Money" we found three different patterns of control over family financial tasks among high-income, dual-earner

couples. These were wife-dominated, husband-dominated, and shared. These patterns of control were related to the wives' relative financial power. When women's financial power nearly equaled their husband's, financial control was more likely to be shared than when financial power was skewed. When she earned substantially more than he, or he earned substantially more than she, he typically controlled financial tasks. This study established that there was a mutual relationship between financial power and family role behaviors. The results were discussed in terms of sex-role stereotypes and a contemporary model of shared roles.

These three preliminary studies documented that for dual-earner couples, the domains of work and family mutually influence one another, and that it is important to investigate intra-spouse as well as cross-spouse work-family relationships. These studies were preliminary to the final study testing a formal model of the direct and indirect relationships between each spouses' work and family life.

In "Restructuring Work for Family: How Dual-Earner Couples with Children Manage", we tested a formal model of the potential causes from each spouses' work and family environments that might lead to a stable restructuring of work. This study was the central objective of the research under this contract.

The first stage of this study was to identify work role requirements that had the greatest potential for conflict with family role requirements. A list of these, generated from the literature included: absorption of wife into husband's work (Papanek, 1973), mobility (Brett and Werbel, 1980), travel (Culbert and Renshaw, 1972), scheduled and unscheduled overtime experienced in terms of evenings, early mornings and weekends at work. In

this study we focused on travel and scheduled and unscheduled overtime. We first determined that managerial and professional jobs frequently had these role requirements. In order to find out more about how role requirements for such occupations shaped family life and how family role requirements might be impacting on the way professionals and managers handled extra role requirements, we interviewed people in three occupations: management, accounting, and law in six firms: one accounting firm, two advertising agencies, two law firms, and a communications company. The interviews were informational. We wanted to document the norms in the firm regarding travel, and scheduled and unscheduled overtime. We also wanted to document whether in those firms managers or professionals were deviating from the norms in order to manage family role requirements and the presumed impact of that deviation. Fifty interviews were conducted. Major findings from the interviews were that there were differences between occupations in demands that might impact family life, and within professions there were large differences between firms with respect to willingness to make accommodations to professionals for family matters. We found advertising to be the most difficult in terms of accommodations to family due to a culture of finishing projects only at the last minute and because extra work was least predictable for professionals in advertising. Extra work was heavy for accountants, but predictable, and there was the compensation of a relatively light work load in the summer months. We found dramatic differences between the two law firms that we studied with respect to allowances being made for family. One firm, for example, was not strict about where lawyers worked. Some worked at home a great deal, others worked in local libraries. The other firm required attendance at a daily morning meeting. Work done

outside of the office, unless at court, was not considered real work.

The results of the interviews were used to develop a set of seven open-ended questions about how professionals handled work/family conflicts on a regular basis:

1. Are your hours of arrival and departure dictated by family schedule?
2. Do you structure your hours at work in order to be at home at certain times?
3. Do you limit the number of evenings per week that you work in the office?
4. Do you limit your weekend work at the office?
5. Do you limit your travel or structure it?
6. Do you make special, one-time arrangements at work in order to attend a child's activity?
7. Do you make any special, one-time arrangements at work in order to accommodate your spouse's needs?

A code was developed based on content and then weighted for the degree to which work was affected, with the greatest number of points for activities that resulted in less work being done and fewer points for rescheduling work.

In "Restructuring Work for Family: How Dual-Earner Couples with Children Manage", we used a survey method to collect data to test the model of relationships between work and family factors and work role restructuring. The results indicated relationships between individual's work and family behaviors. For example, occupation was the primary predictor of work role restructuring. Among both men and women, professionals who had control over their schedules - doctors, therapists,



professors and lawyers did the most work restructuring, managers did the least. There was more restructuring done by early career individuals than those who were established career-wise. There were also interesting cross-over relationships between spouses. For example, wives of men who perceived it would be difficult to replace their jobs (the men's jobs) did more work restructuring than wives of men who perceived it would be easy to replace their jobs. Men whose wives were extremely work involved were doing more work restructuring than men whose wives were less involved. The results of this study showed that work role restructuring is occurring among professionals in systematic patterns associated with conditions of each spouses' work situation and the demands of family.

### Conclusion

The program of research supported on this contract moves our understanding of the impact of work on family life from the anecdotal - the stuff of feature articles in the popular press - to the theoretical and empirical. These studies provide clear evidence that among dual-earner couples work requirements impact on family functioning, and family role requirements are having an impact on the way that people manage their work. Furthermore, while different patterns exist, dual-earner couples' management style is most likely to be complementary rather than compensatory. That is, if one spouse is psychologically involved with family so is the other; if one is restructuring work to accommodate family, so is the other; if one is highly involved in work, so is the other. Thus, when studying dual-earner couples, it is essential to take into account both spouses work and family situations.

With respect to our objectives...

1. The identification of work role and family role behaviors that conflict.

We found through our interviews that the work role behaviors that conflict on a frequent basis with family role behaviors are travel, and scheduled and unscheduled overtime in terms of early mornings, nights and weekends at the office.

2. The identification of occupations where restructuring is occurring. We

found in the "Restructuring" study that some occupations are more amenable to restructuring than others. In particular, the doctors, therapists, and college professors, who had a great deal of time flexibility at work were the most likely to restructure. Lawyers, too, were able to restructure work to better manage family matters. Managers were least able to restructure work.

3. The identification of family types. We found in the "Patterns" study that single and dual earner families are very different in terms of patterns of family functioning. There were few cross-spouse relationships among single earner couples, but a variety of cross-spouse relationships among dual-earner couples. Role symmetry first with respect to family and also frequently with respect to work was the prevalent pattern for dual-earner couples.

In the "Restructuring" study, we found that working couples without children behaved very differently than those with children and subsequently dropped those couples without children from the test of the restructuring model.

4. The identification of conditions that facilitate restructuring. In the

"Restructuring" study, we found that job involvement, labor economic environment, organizational culture and career stage, all were related to

work restructuring, though not necessarily in the direct ways hypothesized. Our model was developed by extending individual level hypotheses to the couples as a unit of analysis. The results suggested that at the couple level of analysis, relationships are a complex mix of direct and indirect effects. For example, her job involvement was related to his restructuring. The more involved she was with work, the more he was actively restructuring his own work. Yet, the more difficult it would be for him to replace his job, the more likely it was she who was doing the restructuring.

5. The measurement of restructuring. Based on a series of interviews and pretests, we developed a self-administered technique to measure the degree of work restructuring and used it in the "Restructuring" study.

6. The test of the model. We tested a non-recursive model of a dual-earner couple's work restructuring in the "Restructuring" study. Modeling behavior is usually difficult and this study is no exception. The amount of variance accounted for in this study, particularly in the reciprocal relationships between the spouses, was disappointing. On the other hand, all the variables in the predictor model had significant bivariate relationships with either his or her restructuring. So, even though we were unable to specify the exact relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables, we were able to identify theoretically and verify empirically, variables that were related to work role restructuring.

Much research is yet to be done in this area. The primary questions left unanswered by this program of research are what long-term impact work role restructuring will have on people's careers and their family lives. It is yet to be determined if the early career individuals found in this research to be restructuring their work are building for themselves "protean

careers" (Hall, 1976) where the goal of advancement is replaced with a goal of a lifelong sequence of fulfilling working experiences that does not necessarily mean advancing to the top of their profession. Alternatively, they may be developing "accommodative careers" (Bailyn, 1977), attending to family but at the same time, developing consistently, if slowly at work. It also remains to be seen whether the couples in this study who are working as a team to manage the demands of work and family will have longer-term, stable marriages than couples who have not built up the communications patterns and accommodation management style characteristic of the couples in our sample who are both restructuring work in order to manage family in a dual-earner marriage.

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Principle Investigators

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Technical Reports

1. Yogev, S. and Brett, J. M. (1983). Perceptions of the Division of Housework and Child Care and Marital Satisfaction. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.
2. Yogev, S. and Brett, J. M. (1983). Patterns of Work and Family Involvement among Single and Dual Earner Couples: Two Competing Analytical Approaches. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.
3. Yogev, S. and Brett, J. M. (1987). Professional Couples and Money. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research.
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